

For Immediate Release: February 09, 2017  
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**MICHIGAN  
ROUNDTABLE**  
FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION



## Loving Our Neighbors Is What Has Always Made America Great

**Detroit | MI, February 09, 2017** - Our organizations have come together to protect and defend this country we all love from the dangers of unbridled fear and the ill-considered actions that have followed.

America is undoubtedly a great nation. And yet at times we forget what has made it great. Since its revolution it has had the advantage of millions of immigrants who have been willing to work hard to make America great right alongside those who arrived earlier. Just like our forebears these new immigrants pour their creative energies into America because they are so grateful to be in a place that respects them, honors their efforts and insists on the value of religious freedom.

Now America seems willing to ignore all of that at a time in our economic history when we can least afford to lose that effort and creativity. We are literally turning on ourselves, willing to succumb to our fears despite the damage it will do - damage much more certain than what it fears. We are concerned that America will lose its soul and much more.

Have no doubt that we recognize our government's obligation to protect us from foreign and domestic threats. Our government has taken that responsibility very seriously by carefully investigating refugees and immigrants for two years before they are allowed to enter the country.

The executive order banning travel from seven majority Muslim countries harms our American families and is alienating the very friends we need right now. It follows a record number of documented hateful actions perpetrated upon Muslims in Michigan and throughout the United States and clearly communicates that this is a religious ban on all Muslims. We are watching as this travel ban brings pain to our good friends and productive neighbors while unleashing unstable individuals to commit more acts of hate and discrimination upon innocent Muslims who love America dearly.

Few people know someone who is Muslim nor are many people knowledgeable about the religion of Islam. Misinformation and fear can cause people to scapegoat others. Muslims are peace-loving citizens. All religions, including Islam, have been used for political and economic gain at one time or another. Some disturbed people, calling themselves Muslims, have hijacked Islam. Muslims worldwide have roundly condemned them. People who do not know Muslims may be moved to voice hatred. Unstable people may feel they were given license to do even worse, the fire set at a mosque in Texas being a sad recent example.

This executive order singling out Muslims has created a very dangerous situation for our Muslim neighbors and their families. It is a religious ban that raises troubling Constitutional issues. It has not made Americans safer. It is in fact harming the social fabric that protects us all and has always made America great.

Our organizations are busy engaging people across religious difference and we urge all Michiganders to reach out to your Muslim neighbors to assist them with their safety concerns. If you do not know someone who is a Muslim, reach out to our organizations and we will assist you in this journey of, friendship, solidarity and public safety.



Hassan Jaber, *ACCESS*  
Abed Ayoub, *American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee*  
Dawud Walid, *Council of American Islamic Relations*  
Bob Bruttell, *Interfaith Leadership Council*  
Muzammil Ahmed, *Michigan Muslim Community Council*  
Steve Spreitzer, *Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion*

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*The Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion has been a not-for-profit human relations and racial justice organization located in Detroit working to overcome discrimination and racism by crossing racial, religious, ethnic and cultural boundaries for the past 76 years. The Roundtable brings together interested citizens and community leaders to understand different points of view and then act to overcome structural impediments to inclusion and equity.*